

POSSES HUNT HILLS AFTER ARMED MAN

TRIB C-APR 19 1934

St. Helena Ranch Hand
Sought Following Gun Battle
With Arresting Officer

ST. HELENA, April 19.—Expecting a gunfight at any moment, posses headed by Sheriff Jack Steckter scoured the Spring Mountain wilderness west of here today for J. T. Beta, ranch worker, who engaged in a hand-to-hand battle with Police Chief Cheney C. Johnson and escaped armed with a rifle.

The struggle took place at the mountain vineyard, where Beta is employed when Johnson sought to arrest the man on a battery complaint. He allegedly met a demand to accompany the officer by attacking him. In the ensuing melee, Johnson showered club blows on the ranch laborer's head.

Breaking away, Beta ran to a nearby cabin and emerged with his rifle, forcing the officer to take refuge in the foreman's dwelling. Johnson opened fire with his automatic revolver. The fugitive sought shelter in a clump of trees and was seen to aim his rifle at the house several times. A short while later he fled up the mountainside.

In the meantime, Johnson had telephoned to St. Helena and Napa for assistance.
